

# **Education and Workforce Development Cabinet**

# **Gov. Beshear awards Kentucky Work Ready Communities**

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## **Contact Information:**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 14, 2014)** – Governor Steve Beshear today announced that Nelson and Pulaski counties have been certified as Kentucky Work Ready Communities and Floyd, Gallatin and Marion counties have achieved Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress status.

The Kentucky Work Ready Communities certification program from the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet assures employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require.

“Congratulations to Nelson and Pulaski counties for achieving Kentucky Work Ready Communities status,” said Gov. Beshear. “This designation shows employers that a county has completed rigorous requirements and is a cut above other communities nationally when it comes to developing a skilled labor force. I encourage all Kentucky communities to strive for the Kentucky Work Ready Communities designation and applaud the counties that are currently in that process.”

To become certified, a county must gather local support and commitment and apply for the Work Ready Community designation. Counties have to meet criteria in six areas including high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development and digital literacy.

In addition to Nelson and Pulaski, the counties of Boyle, Clark, Daviess, Henderson, Madison, Oldham, Rowan, Shelby, Warren and Woodford have been designated as Kentucky Work Ready Communities since certification began in February 2012. Counties that achieve Kentucky Work Ready status must be recertified every two years.

“The Kentucky Work Ready Communities program momentum is growing as more communities learn about the certification and how it can help them achieve a higher level of competitiveness among business and industry,” said Ed Holmes, chair of KWIB. “In addition to the 38 counties that have achieved certification as Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress, another 45-50 are in the process of applying.”

“We are excited to designate Floyd, Gallatin and Marion counties as Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress, and we look forward to certifying many others in the future,” said

Roxann Fry, chair of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities Review Panel and senior consultant at Tennessee Valley Authority Economic Development.

Currently, 26 counties have been designated as Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress because they are close to meeting the Kentucky Work Ready Community criteria. To achieve this level, a county must present a viable plan to meet all of the criteria within three years. The designation shows that a community is making strides and working with its business, education, workforce and economic development leaders to set and meet common goals that will give the county an economic edge.

Applications for the certification were reviewed by a panel appointed by the KWIB. The panel recommended certification by the board for the counties that met the criteria. The panel meets four times a year to review applications, which can be submitted at any time.

For more information about the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program, go to <http://workready.ky.gov>.